

PN STYLE GUIDE

NEIGHBORHOOD AND REGION GUIDELINES

Philadelphia has the following regions: North, Northeast, Northwest, South, Southwest, West, Center City, Old City, River Wards. All neighborhoods fall into these larger regions. When referring to central Philadelphia, use Center City, not downtown.

In all instances except quotes, use Philadelphia, not Philly.

Remember that you are writing for a Philadelphia publication. Neighborhoods do not need clarification, i.e.:

Correct: John Smith, a 10-year-resident of Germantown, said there's too much construction on his block.

Incorrect: John Smith, a resident of Philadelphia's Germantown neighborhood, said there's too much construction on his block.

All blocks need clarification and context. Write about the 2300-block of Palmer Street, or Wallace Street between 17th and 18th streets. A story about Palmer Street or Wallace Street with no geographical context creates a disconnect.

HOMONYMS AND COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

Accept, Except

Accept is a verb meaning to receive. Except is usually a preposition meaning excluding.

For example: I will accept all the packages except that one.

Advice, Advise

Advice is a noun. Advise is a verb. **For example:** You can advise someone, but you can't advice him.

Affect, Effect

Affect is a verb meaning to influence. Effect is a noun meaning result. **For example:** The drug did not affect the disease, and it had several adverse side effects.

Aid, Aide

Aid is a verb or a noun referring to an inhuman object and aide is a noun meaning a person (assistant). **For example:** I need more financial aid. He can aid me in getting home from the doctor's office. He got a job as a legal aide.

Allusion, Elude, Illusion

An allusion is an indirect reference. Elude means to avoid or escape. An illusion is a

misconception or false impression. **For example:** Did you catch my allusion to Shakespeare? The truth eludes me. Mirrors give the room an illusion of depth.

Anxious, Eager

Both imply desire, but anxious includes an element of fear or concern. **For example:** I am anxious about my test tomorrow. I am eager to take my test tomorrow.

As if, Like

As if a conjunction. Like is a preposition. The proper way to differentiate between like and as is to use like when no verb follows. If the clause that comes next includes a verb, then you should use as. **For example:** John throws like a raccoon. It acted just like my computer. John throws as if he were a raccoon. It acted just as I would expect my computer to behave.

Capital, Capitol

Capital refers to a city and also to wealth or resources. Capitol refers to a building where lawmakers meet. **For example:** The capitol has undergone extensive renovations. The residents of the state capital protested the development plans.

Censored, Censured

Censor means to regulate or prohibit writing or speech. This is normally a verb. When used as a noun, censor is a person who censors. Censure is a formal rebuke or official displeasure. It is done by someone, usually some kind of assembly, in authority. Censure can be either a noun or a verb, though the verb is more common. **For example:** The censure of Sen. McCarthy effectively ended his career. The Synod voted to censure the priest for his unauthorized activities. Soldiers' letters from war zones are frequently censored to avoid passing on sensitive information. The soldier would have to carefully word his letter so that it would pass the censor."

Cite, Sight, Site

Cite means to quote something, usually something of authority. Citing can also be a case of mentioning supporting facts. Sight refers to either your vision or to something you see. Site refers to a physical location, such as a house or a neighborhood. **For example:** Christians frequently cite the Bible as the foundation for their beliefs. I loved seeing the sights around town. That's a big construction site.

Climactic, Climatic

Climactic is derived from climax, the point of greatest intensity in a series or progression of events. Climatic is derived from climate; it refers to meteorological conditions. **For example:** The climactic period in the dinosaurs' reign was reached just before severe climatic conditions brought on the ice age.

Compliment, Complement

When you pay someone a compliment, you are expressing admiration for something. A

complement is something that enhances or completes something else. **For example:** You are complimenting someone when you tell him he gave a great speech, or when you tell him you like his Mickey Mouse watch. A nice tie complements a suit. A dessert of pumpkin pie complements a great turkey dinner.

Composed, Comprised

Compose means make up or make. The parts compose the whole. Comprise means made up of or consists of. The whole comprises the parts. **For example:** The rock is composed of three minerals. The rock comprises three minerals.

Disinterested, Uninterested

Disinterested means impartial. Uninterested means not interested in. **For example:** Let's find a disinterested person to resolve this argument. The student was uninterested in the subject matter.

Elicit, Illicit

Elicit is a verb meaning to bring out or to evoke. Illicit is an adjective meaning unlawful. **For example:** The reporter was unable to elicit information from the police about illicit drug traffic.

Emigrate from, Immigrate to

Emigrate means to leave one country or region to settle in another. Immigrate means to enter another country and reside there. **For example:** In 1900, my grandfather emigrated from Russia. Many Mexicans immigrate to the U.S. to find work.

Ensure, Insure

Ensure means to guarantee or to make sure, safe, or certain. Insure means to provide insurance coverage on something or someone. **For example:** Betsy wrapped the glass vase carefully to ensure it wouldn't break. Betsy paid extra at the post office to insure the package against loss and damage.

Fair, Fare

Fair refers to being free from bias or injustice. It can also mean pale or light-colored. Fare refers to the price of a ticket for transportation (such as airfare), or it can refer to how something worked or played out. **For example:** The judge was fair. He fared well as a pirate.

Farther, Further

Farther shows a relationship to physical distance. Further relates to a metaphorical distance or depth and shows time, degree or quantity. **For example:** He lives farther from the city than I do, so he wants to further his education in urban studies.

Flair, Flare

Flair means a special talent or aptitude. It can also refer to elegance or style. Flare is

something that fire does when it gets stronger. You would also use this word to describe something that starts suddenly and violently, such as a bad argument. **For example:** You have a flair for playing the piano. That snappy tie gives your suit a certain flair. Wildfires flared up in the western valley.

Imply, Infer

The sender of a message implies. The receiver of a message infers. **For example:** She implied she had better things to do when we spoke on the phone earlier. I inferred from his letter that he'd be home soon.

Lead, Led

Lead is a noun for element/material. Led is past tense of the verb lead. **For example:** Lead is a chemical element. You should lead us through your process. She led the group on a tour of Philadelphia.

Lend, Loan

A loan refers to money. Lend refers to everything else. **For example:** I will lend you my dress. I will loan him \$100.

Lay, Lie

Lay requires a direct object and lie does not. **For example:** Please lay the book on the table. I need to lie down on the sofa.

More than, Over

More than means having a larger amount of something. Over takes a spatial reference. **For example:** She has more than \$500 in her account. I couldn't see my book on the desk, because she put hers over mine.

Peak, Peek, Pique

Peak means the highest point of something, such as the peak of a mountain. Peek means to take a quick, often sneaky look at something. Pique means to excite interest, but it can also mean being irritated. **For example:** He piqued my interest in the princess who lives on top of the mountain, so I decided to climb to the peak and have a peek for myself.

Principle, Principal

Principal is a noun meaning the head of a school or an organization or a sum of money. Principle is a noun meaning a basic truth or law. **For example:** The principal taught us many important life principles.

Reluctant, Reticent

Reluctant means unwilling. Reticent means silent. **For example:** The healthcare industry has been reluctant to embrace outsourcing firms. They were reticent about their main concerns, and few wanted to talk about how they voted.

Set, Sit

Set is a transitive verb meaning to put or to place. Its principal parts are set, set, set.

Sit is an intransitive verb meaning to be seated. Its principal parts are sit, sat, sat.

For example: She set the dough in a warm corner of the kitchen. The cat sat in the warmest part of the room.

Than, Then

Than is a conjunction used in comparisons. Then is an adverb denoting time. **For**

example: That pizza is more than I can eat. Tom laughed, and then we recognized him.

Taut, Taught

Taut means tight. Taught is the past tense of teach. **For example:** His body was taut with tight muscles. She taught her how to do bench presses.

There, Their, They're

There is an adverb specifying place; it is also an expletive. Their is a possessive pronoun.

They're is a contraction of they are. **For example:** Sylvia is lying there unconscious. There are two plums left. Fred and Jane finally washed their car. They're later than usual today.

Wave, Waive

Wave is a disturbance on the surface of a liquid body, as the sea or a lake, in the form of a moving ridge or swell. Wave is also a fluttering sign or signal made with the hand or flag.

Waive means to refrain from claiming or insisting on; give up; forgo: to waive one's right; to waive one's rank; to waive honors. **For example:** She waved goodbye to her friends. The flag waved in the wind. He waived his right to an attorney.

Your, You're

Your is a possessive pronoun. You're is a contraction of you are. **For example:** You're going to catch a cold if you don't wear your coat.

PUNCTUATION

Commas

- **In a series:** Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction (and) in a simple series. **For example:** The flag is red, white and blue. He would nominate Tom, Dick or Harry. **Exception:** I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.
- **In a series:** Use commas to separate all elements of a series, which is not a simple series. **For example:** The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.
- **With introductory clauses and phrases.** Use commas to avoid confusion. **For example:** He was a homerun hitter, especially at home.

- **With Places:** Use commas between city and state, and after city and state. **For example:** In Lower Merion, Pa., the taxes are extremely high.
- **With Ages:** Use commas before and after ages. **For example:** Mary Jones, 48, was present.

Quotation Marks

- The comma OR period at the end of a quote always goes INSIDE the quote. **For example:** “I have no intention of staying,” he replied. “I do not object,” he said, “to the idea of the report.” Franklin said, “A penny saved is a penny earned.” Franklin said: “A penny saved is a penny earned. I like pennies.” An investor said the practice is “too conservative for these times.”
- Question marks and exclamation points usually go inside the quotes, with one exception: If the sentence itself is a question, and the quotes refer to a title. **For example:** “Do you want to come to the movies with me?” he asked. Did you like reading “Brave New World”?
- A semicolon always goes on the outside of a quote. **For example:** Her favorite song was “Stairway to Heaven”; she spent months learning it on her guitar.

Cities and States

- Put a comma after the city and the state. **For example:** She said Cook County, Ill., was where she grew up.
- Spell out the name of the 50 states when they stand alone. **For example:** He was from Mississippi.
- Eight states are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.
- The abbreviations for the states are NOT the ZIP code abbreviations: Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., N.H., N.J., N.Y., N.D., N.C., Okla., Pa., Ore., R.I., S.D., Vt., Wash., Wis., N.C., Okla., Pa., S.C., Tenn., Va., W.Va., Wyo.

Ages

- Always use numbers. **For example:** The boy, 7, has a sister, 10.
- If the age is an adjective before a noun or substitutes for a noun, use hyphens. **For example:** A 5-year-old boy. The woman, 26, has a daughter 2 months old. The law is 8 years old. The race is for 3-year-olds.
- Don't use an apostrophe to describe decades, centuries, etc. **For example:** The woman is in her 30s.

Dates

- Always put a comma after the year. **For example:** She was born Oct. 17, 1965, in Indiana.
- For incomplete dates, spell out the month. For example: It is October 1965. It is Oct. 15, 2016.
- Don't use an apostrophe when ta

Other Numbers

- Write out numbers below 10. Otherwise use the numeral. **For example:** There are nine students in the class. A total of 22 people were killed in the attack. He had three cats, 17 dogs and two birds. It is \$1 million.
- The only number that is not written out at the beginning of a sentence is a year. **For example:** 1969 was crazy.

Political Designations

Check seventy.org for information regarding wards and districts.

Possessive Words

- Add an "s" at the end of a possessive word. **For example:** Sally's dress was blue.
- If the plural noun already ends in "s" then add just an apostrophe. **For example:** Most of the runners' legs were tired after the marathon.
- If a proper name ends with an "s" add an apostrophe only. **For example:** Chris' book was taking off on Amazon.
- There is no apostrophe with possessive pronouns such as yours, its, theirs, whose, his, hers ours, mine.

The Semicolon

A semicolon is used to join two or more ideas in a sentence and give them equal position or rank. **For example:** Some people prefer film photography; others prefer digital photography.

GRAMMAR

Who and Whom, That and Which

- Use who and whom for references to people and animals with names. **For example:** The woman who cooked this meal is an incredible chef. Fluffy, the kitten who I found on the street, was adopted within 24 hours.
- Use that and which for inanimate objects and animals without names. **For example:** The knife, that was too dull to cut this potato, needed to be sharpened. The crocodile, which attacked the child in the pool, was tranquilized.

- Use who for subjects of a sentence, clause or phrase. **For example:** The woman who rented the room left the window open. Who is there?
- Use whom when someone is the object of a verb or preposition. **For example:** The women to whom the room was rented left the window open. Whom do you wish to see, sir?
- That introduces a dependent clause. It should always be used if there's a time element. **For example:** The president said Monday that he had signed the bill.
- Which refers to an inanimate object or a pet without a name. It can be used as a pronoun. **For example:** Which dress will you wear?
- That is also restrictive, meaning it refers to a specific thing. Which is more general. **For example:** The horse, which is six years old, is in the stable. The horse that is in the stable is six years old.

Verb Tense Agreement

- Do not change tense in the middle of a story.
- Make sure the subject of the verb and the verb agree in tense. **For example:** Mary, who has many dresses, is always stylish.
- Be particularly careful about two instances: When there is a phrase between the subject and when the verb and when the subject is a collective noun. **For example:** The group was ready to go. The herd of cattle was sold.
- Media is the plural of medium. Media takes a plural verb. **For example:** The media are changing rapidly.
- Avoid passive tenses; use active tenses. **For example:** Johnny's parents sped him to the hospital.

Pronouns

An organization is an it. The City Council is an it. Don't use they. Make sure you can identify the noun to which you are referring when you use a pronoun. Make sure the pronoun agrees with gender and number.

Titles

- Titles before a name are usually capitalized. For example, Mayor Kenney is coming to Temple today. The mayor handled the problem.
- Check the AP Stylebook for additional title style rules.

Addresses

- 26 Church St.
- 26 Church Ave.
- 26 Church Blvd.
- 26 Church Lane
- Church Street

- Church Avenue
- Church Boulevard
- Church and Park streets